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SUBJECT: Turkey Will Open Second PRT in Afghanistan, Wants a Seat at the Table

Ref: Kabul 3746
Kabul 2814

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1. (SBU) Summary: Turkish Ambassador to Afghanistan Basat Ozturk said Turkey will open a PRT in Sheberghan, Jowzjan province, in 2010 and is willing to increase assistance in the fields of health, agriculture and education, while expanding police and governance programs. Turkey's existing PRT in Wardak province demonstrates civilian-led PRTs are the way forward, Ozturk said. Despite Turkey's contributions and Washington "promises" to include Turkey, Ozturk said his Embassy still feels left out of crucial discussions in Kabul. In this regard, he noted Turkey will be the lead nation in the United Nations Security Council for Afghan issues in 2010. Amb. Wayne pointed out that Turkey already attends most multilateral donor meetings in Kabul but invited Ozturk to encourage his staff to meet more regularly with U.S. mission personnel to coordinate assistance. Ozturk also suggested President Obama outline the civilian component of a predicted troop increase when Prime Minister Erdogan visits Washington December 7, following U.S.-Turkey consultations in Ankara on December 2, and "instruct us on the way ahead." End Summary.

PRT Jowzjan: Police Training, Education, Health, and Agriculture
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2. (SBU) Forty five days after his arrival in Kabul, Ozturk told Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs, Amb. E. Anthony Wayne, November 23 that Turkey is well positioned to help Afghanistan become a modern state and "rediscover its Sufi roots." He heralded Turkey's performance in Wardak province (and Regional Command-Kabul) and claimed that even in those areas where Turkey lacks official personnel, it wields soft power through popular high schools and expeditionary Turkish businesses. The Turkish Government has informed NATO, the Afghan, German, and Swedish Governments of its intent to open a PRT in Sheberghan in Jowzjan province, and is currently drafting a budget and recruiting personnel for a spring 2010 opening. The PRT will focus on building schools, roads and health clinics; providing agricultural assistance; and potentially covering neighboring Sar-i-Pol province. (Note: it remains unclear whether Turkey will assume responsibility for security in Jowzjan from Sweden.)

3. (SBU) Turkey will also establish a police training center in Jowzjan and will run train-the-trainer programs in Turkey, Ozturk said. He sought to dispel rumors that Turkey obstructed the relationship between NATO and the EU Police Mission to Afghanistan (EUPOL), adding that EUPOL struggles to recruit police officers. Turkey will coordinate with the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTMA) but will not necessarily transfer authority, Ozturk said, because "if we raise the NATO flag in Wardak we will have problems." He added that the Turkish jandarma and sub-provincial governments

may provide personnel for police and governance training.

¶4. (SBU) Turkey has built several health clinics and will build more, Ozturk said, but he highlighted the lack of Afghan doctors to staff new health facilities as a serious problem. Doctors at a new Turkish-built facility want to "give it back," he said, and some new clinics have no medical staff at all. U.S. representatives emphasized the importance of involving the Ministry of Public Health, prior to construction, to ensure adequate staffing and sustainability.

¶5. (SBU) Ozturk said Turkey's existing PRT in Wardak province demonstrates civilian-led reconstruction efforts can be successful, adding that military-led reconstruction produces quick results but creates a fundamentally different mentality. He welcomed the U.S. civilian uplift and its emphasis on the district level. Asking for U.S. assistance in countering rumors that Turkey is biased toward Turkic Uzbeks and Turkmens, Ozturk pointed out that most of his country's projects aid non-Turkic Afghans and provide assistance regardless of ethnicity and gender.

Bring Us In From the Cold

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¶6. (SBU) Before outlining Turkey's contributions to Afghan reconstruction, Ozturk expressed frustration at what he perceives as a lack of access to the American-led decision making process in Kabul. Comparing Turkey's physical and cultural connections with Central Asia and the West to those of post-World War II West Germany, Ozturk said Turkey had been included in Afghan strategy meetings in Washington, Ankara and other capitals -- but not on the ground in Kabul, where he said U.S. and Turkish officials have the most realistic grasp of the situation. He reminded Amb. Wayne that Turkey will be the lead nation in the United Nations Security Council for Afghan issues in 2010. Amb. Wayne pointed out that

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there are few Kabul-based multilateral meetings of partner nations, and that Turkey already attends most of them. He suggested working-level staff meet more regularly with USAID personnel to enhance their knowledge of successful programs already in place and to closely coordinate actions of Turkey's current and future PRTs.

¶7. (SBU) Amb. Wayne outlined the U.S. goals of promoting Afghan leadership, combating corruption and boosting agricultural production for rural Afghans. Ozturk acknowledged the corruption problem and agreed Turkey could set a positive example as a Muslim state with strong institutions at the national and provincial level.

Both highlighted concrete areas of U.S.-Turkish-collaboration in the areas of health, education, agriculture and good governance, which can serve as the basis for more detailed discussions. Ozturk said Prime Minister Erdogan's December 7 visit to Washington is a good opportunity for President Obama to discuss U.S. strategy, particularly the civilian component, and "instruct us on the way ahead."

EIKENBERRY